

# The Tobacco Observer

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## Empty Packs . . . Empty Promises

WASHINGTON, D.C.—What has been termed a "cruel hoax" struck recently at the home of a Tobacco Institute executive.

In it is a lesson.

The wife of an Institute senior vice president began collecting empty cigarette packs, at the request of a friend. The packs, she was told, would be traded for a wheelchair.

The effort to save empty cigarette packs for a charitable purpose is in vain.

Typically, word spreads that some numbers of packs will help provide such things as a dialysis machine for a kidney patient, open-heart surgery for a child, or an iron lung for a polio victim.

Cigarette companies have for many years made sizable contributions to health research, education, and other philanthropic causes, both nationally and in their own communities.

*But none of this involves redemption*

*of empty packs.*

The late Joan Crawford, in a series of radio announcements for a charity cause, once termed reports like the empty cigarette pack rumor a "cruel hoax" which results in "heartbreak and anger."

In a recent example, reported by Associated Press, a Florida woman collected two grocery sacks full of cigarette packs after hearing that they would help pay for kidney dialysis.

William Kloepfer Jr., a senior vice president at TI, told AP that "there is absolutely no basis for this rumor."

The collecting of otherwise useless items by Americans in well-meaning but futile efforts has also included rings from beverage can tops and even tea bags.

"There is just no truth to this heart-breaking rumor," as Joan Crawford said.



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